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THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

COPIES TO:
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RF:WEB

December 8, 1978

Dear Clem:

I want to give you an interim reply to your letter of November 21 concerning the deaths of Congressman Ryan and the Peoples Temple members in Guyana.

We are undertaking an exhaustive review of the events leading up to this tragedy. On December 6, we presented to your staff copies of some nine hundred documents in State Department and Embassy Georgetown files.

These events are of great complexity. I hope you are not distressed by our need for a little more time, until early next week, to provide you a reply to your questions.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

Cy Vance

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____
RDS☐or XDS☐. DATE _____
TS AUTH. _____ EXEMPTION(S) _____
EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION ☐
DECLASSIFIED/RELEASABLE☐
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

The Honorable
Clement J. Zablocki,
Chairman,
Committee on International Relations,
House of Representatives.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1978 NOV 22 AM 11 04

Congress of the United States
Committee on International Relations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

FADRC
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

November 21, 1978

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ACTION
is assigned to
ARA

Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Members of the Committee on International Relations are deeply distressed and concerned over the tragedy which befell the mission to Guyana headed by the late Hon. Leo J. Ryan. As you know, there have been allegations that the Department of State was negligent in this affair.

In determining what steps might be taken in the wake of this matter, the Committee intends to look into all of the circumstances which might have a bearing on this tragic incident. It is, therefore, essential that the Department of State cooperate fully with the Committee in the conduct of this inquiry.

Specifically, we request a copy of the following: all cable traffic between the American Embassy in Guyana and the Department of State regarding the activities of the Peoples Temple Church and its agricultural commune in Jonestown since the establishment of the facility in Guyana; and all communications on the activities of the Peoples Temple Church which the Department has received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government agencies.

Additionally, we need answers to the following questions (unless such answers are contained in the materials requested above):

1. To what extent were the Department of State and the American Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, aware of the potential physical danger to the Ryan Delegation of a visit by them to Jonestown?

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CLEMENT J. ZABLOCK

2. What advice did the Department of State and the Embassy in Guyana give Congressman Ryan with respect to the potential violence which could arise as a result of such a visit in view of the presence of weapons in Jonestown and the mood of its inhabitants with respect to visits by outsiders?

3. Once Mr. Ryan made known his intent to visit Jonestown, did the American Embassy request the Government of Guyana to provide the delegation with security protection or other assistance? If not, why not, and if so, what was the nature and extent of the response on the part of the Government of Guyana?

4. What communication facilities were available to the Ryan delegation during the members' stay in Georgetown and Port Kaituma? What special arrangements for communications with Jonestown, if any, were made for the Ryan delegation?

5. How many visits to Jonestown has the American Embassy made on behalf of U.S. citizens' inquiries since the inception of the settlement? What were the specific findings and results of these visits? Did the Embassy representatives have full and complete access to the inhabitants and facilities in Jonestown?

6. What information does the Department of State have with respect to the relationship between the Government of Guyana, its officials, and the Peoples Temple Church settlement in Jonestown and its facility in Georgetown?

7. Was the Department of State and/or the American Embassy aware of the presence in Jonestown of extensive quantities of firearms and ammunition? If so, was this information given to the Ryan delegation? Did the presence of the firearms and ammunition conform to relevant Guyanese laws? If not, what action, if any, did the Government of Guyana take with respect to the presence of the weapons?

8. Were the activities of the Peoples Temple Church investigated by the FBI and/or other U.S. Government agencies and, if so, were their findings made available to the Department of State?

9. What efforts were undertaken by the U.S. Embassy in Guyana to insure that American lives and property of the Jonestown inhabitants were adequately safeguarded?

10. Was the U.S. Embassy in Guyana aware of any reports of physical violence being directed against members of the Peoples Temple Church and, if so, was this information made available to the Department of State in Washington?

11. Was the Government of Guyana ever requested to investigate the activities of the Peoples Temple Church? If not, why not?

12. Did representatives of any U.S. Government agency interview individuals who had "defected" from the Peoples Temple Church in Guyana? If so, was this information made known to Congressman Ryan?

13. Was any consideration given to restricting the passports of potential inhabitants of Jonestown who applied for a passport for the purpose of going to Guyana pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 211a as amended?

It is respectfully requested that the information sought by the Committee be submitted not later than December 1, 1978.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Clement J. Zablocki

Chairman

CJZ:jbd

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

7922529

S/S

December 8, 1978

UNCLASSIFIED

TO : The Secretary

FROM : ARA - Viron P. Vaky
H - Douglas J. Bennet, Jr

SUBJECT : Interim Reply to Congressman Zablocki Concerning the Jonestown Tragedy

On November 21 Chairman Zablocki wrote to you concerning the tragedy which befell the mission to Guyana headed by the late Congressman Ryan. He requested documents bearing upon these events and addressed 13 questions to the Department on behalf of the Committee.

We have been engaged in an exhaustive examination of these events and our dealings with the Peoples Temple at Jonestown. On December 5 we delivered to the Committee staff copies of more than 900 documents in Department and Embassy Georgetown files. Our efforts to reply in a forthcoming way to the questions raised by the Committee have led us down paths we had not anticipated. We were unable to meet Chairman Zablocki's deadline of December 1 for a reply to these questions and the other matters we are bringing to the Committee's attention. We will, however, be able to provide our response by December 12.

We believe it desirable that you give Chairman Zablocki an interim reply to his letter, explaining our need and noting that we will be able to respond to his letter soon. The Committee staff has already agreed informally to this postponement.

UNCLASSIFIED

Recommendation:

That you sign the interim reply to Chairman Zablocki at Tab 1.

Attachments:

1. Interim reply to Chairman Zablocki.
2. Chairman Zablocki's November 21 letter to you.

Drafted: ARA:BGrove, Jr.:bgt
12/7/78, ext 28386
S/S #7822524
ARA Log # 904C

Clearance: H:EKrizek

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

SANITIZED NF Rev. I

ACTION SLIP

UNCL.
(Attachment Classification)

S/S CONTROL NUMBER: 7822524

ACTION ASSIGNED TO: ARA

DATE 11/29

(Action Office Instructions on Reverse)

ACTION REQUESTED

___ STATE TO NSC MEMO
___ STATE TO

___ with Draft reply for signature by _____
___ with Comment or Recommendation

___ DIRECT REPLY

✓ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY S

___ provide info copy under cover of State-NSC transmittal form
___ provide comeback copy for _____

___ RECOMMENDATION FOR _____
___ with Memorandum for the President

___ APPROPRIATE HANDLING

___ FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DUE IN S/S BY: 12/4
CLEAR WITH: H, L, D, EA

REMARKS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

___ S	___ UNA	___ A	✓ SCA	
✓ D	___ S/AB	___ CU	___ AF	
✓ P	___ S/AR	___ EB	___ ARA	
___ E	___ S/MS	✓ H	___ EA	
___ T	___ S/P	___ IGA	___ EUR	
✓ M	___ S/PRS	___ INR	___ NEA	
___ C	___ S/CPR	___ IO	___ ACDA	
___ S/S	___ S/IG	✓ L	___ AID	
___ S/S-O	___ S/IL	___ OES		
___ S/S-EX	___ S/NM	___ PA		
✓ S/S-S II	___ D/HA	___ PM		
___ TEAM A	___ D/IWY			
___ TEAM B	___ D/LOS			
✓ TEAM C	___ M/CT			
___ TEAM D	___ M/DG			
✓ S/S-I (RF)	___ M/EEO			
	___ M/MO			

FROM: Julie Jacobson (NAME)

S/S-S:	A	B	C	D
20318	21522	28338	28348	28062